

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2012

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson,

The Utica and Marcellus shale regions of the United States have abundant reserves of oil and natural gas. The development of these resources has the ability to significantly benefit our economy. Our states have the ability to create thousands of new jobs, generate millions of dollars of new revenue for governments, and help enhance our nation's energy security. Because of this great potential and our desire to protect the environment, we are carefully following the progress of your agency's study exploring the potential impact of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources (HF Study). We believe it is in the interest of the citizens of our states and the nation as a whole that this study be conducted as directed by Congress, "using a credible approach that relies on the best available science" and in accordance with the highest scientific standards.

Battelle Memorial Institute (Battelle) recently conducted a critical review of your Agency's study plan and the associated quality management documents governing the conduct of your HF Study. The Battelle report highlights many deficiencies in the study design and conduct, including problems in the quality assurance plan and the idea of using retrospective sites where baseline data does not exist. These issues, if not addressed at the outset, would materially impact the scientific rigor and validity of the study results.

This study is too important to the future of domestic energy development to be conducted in a manner that falls short of the highest scientific standards. We, therefore, urge you to take seriously the Battelle report findings. We encourage you to heed Battelle's recommendation to engage with outside experts, including experts from industry, and to carefully consider the report critiques and recommendations, making adjustments to the study plan and path forward, as appropriate.

EPA's recent studies on hydraulic fracturing have given us cause to be concerned about the manner in which this study is designed, executed, and the way that information is released to the public. EPA's work on other studies, including the investigation of alleged contamination incidents in Pavillion, Wyoming, Parker, Texas, and Dimock, Pennsylvania has lacked the observance of the highest scientific standards and created tremendous public concern, despite not having a sound basis for the initial findings. Unfortunately, the damage was done by the premature release of faulty results.

Therefore, it's critical to avoid another such misstep especially with this current study. Additionally, there are many countries around the world that are now considering the development of oil and natural gas resources, the recovery of which will rely upon hydraulic fracturing. The EPA report will quite likely be a guiding document in the development of many of these policies and programs.

We support the important goals of this study and the continued development of our nation's domestic oil and natural gas resources. We look forward to a detailed response identifying areas where the Agency will move to improve the scientific rigor and validity of the study.

Sincerely,

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